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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/591,071

08/30/2006

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11/07/2008

EXAMINER

ZENATI, AMAL S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2614

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/591,071	Applicant(s) VAN LOON ET AL.	
	Examiner AMAL ZENATI	Art Unit 2614	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>08/30/2006</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. **Claims 1 - 11** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102 (b) as being anticipated by **Fuhrmann et al (US Patent No.: 6,347,218 B1; hereinafter Fuhrmann)**

Consider **claim 1, Fuhrmann** clearly shows and discloses a discussion unit (10) for use in a conference system, wherein the discussion unit (10) is adapted to be connected to at least one second discussion unit (10), wherein the discussion unit (10) comprises an essentially closed casing (410) and at least one exchangeable portion (420), wherein the at least one exchangeable portion (420) is removably mounted to the casing (410) (abstract; and fig. 1).

Consider **claim 2, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), The discussion unit (10) according to the preceding claim, wherein the exchangeable portion (420) at least partially covers at least one outside part (424, 412) of the casing (410) (fig. 1, label 14).

Consider **claim 3, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the at least one exchangeable portion (420) comprises at least one rim (422), preferably a closed rim (422) (fig. 1, label 4).

Consider **claim 4, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the method, wherein the rim (422) covers at least one edge portion (424) of the discussion unit (10) (fig. 4, label 6).

Consider **claim 5, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the casing (410) comprises at least one operating panel (412), the operating panel (412) having at least one panel base

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(414) and at least one operating element (416), wherein the panel base (414) is at least partially surrounded by the rim (422) (fig. 1, labels: 4 and 6; and col. 2, lines 53-67).

Consider **claim 6, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the at least one exchangeable portion (420) is mounted to the casing (410) by at least one interconnection (426), the at least one interconnection (426) comprising at least one of the following: a form-fit interconnection; a force-fit interconnection (426), preferably a snap-on mounting and/or a snap-hook (428) and/or a catch (438) (fig. 1, labels: 12, 13, and 14).

Consider **claim 7, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the casing (410) comprises at least one first section (452) and at least one second section (454), the at least one first section (452) and the at least one second section (454) being adapted to be attached to each other, wherein the at least one interconnection (426) is inaccessible from the outside of the casing (410) when the at least one first section (452) and the at least one second section (454) are attached to each other (fig. 1, labels: 2, 6, 12, and 14).

Consider **claim 8, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the at least one first section (452) and the at least one second section (454) are adapted to be attached to each other by means of screwing (fig. 1, labels: 13 and 4).

Consider **claim 9, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), an exchangeable portion (420) adapted to be used as the at least one exchangeable portion (420) in a discussion unit (10) (abstract).

Consider **claim 10, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein a set of exchangeable portions (420), the set comprising at least two exchangeable portions (420) according to the preceding claim, wherein at least two of the exchangeable portions (420) differ with regard to color and/or material (col. 1, lines 41-46).

Consider **claim 11, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein a conference system comprising at least two discussion units (10) according to one of the preceding claims referring to a discussion unit (10) (fig. 1; and col. 2, lines 45-51).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amal Zenati whose telephone number is (571) 270- 1947. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis Kuntz can be reached on (571) 272-7499. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571- 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/CURTIS KUNTZ/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614

/Amal Zenati/
Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614

November 6, 2008

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